

Washington, DC-U.S. Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23), a member of the powerful House Appropriations Committee who voted against all three bailout bills that went before Congress last year today held a conference call with members of the media to discuss the work he has done to enable communities to take full advantage of the economic stimulus expected to pass Congress in the coming weeks.

This package is the first crucial step in a concerted effort to create and save 3 to 4 million jobs, jumpstart the economy with \$275 billion in economic recovery tax cuts and \$550 billion in thoughtful and carefully targeted priority investments with unprecedented accountability measures built in.

Below are the remarks of Rodriguez as prepared:

"Hello and thank you for joining me to discuss the pending Stimulus package currently before Congress. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, we have been working on a package that will help put our economy back on track and also reaching out to communities in our district to help them understand what the money will mean for all of us in our district. After I voted against all of the bailouts for Wall Street and Detroit, I want to work to make our economy better in a fiscally responsible manner that benefits the people that live in my district, and NOT just the CEOs.

"I hope that our district is in a position to benefit from the funding expected from our stimulus bill and I know many communities have already identified projects for the stimulus.

"I wanted to communicate what I have been told in Committee about the stimulus in the hopes we can capitalize on this funding to beef up our infrastructure and put people to work.

"First of all, we are talking about approximately \$800 billion. Those funds will be split in 3 separate sections. About \$300 billion will go toward "construction-ready" or "shovel-ready" infrastructure projects. By "construction ready" we mean projects that can break ground tomorrow, not projects still in design phases or concept phases. These included Army Corps of Engineers projects, mass transit, rail security, water projects,

and many others.

"Another \$200 billion will go toward economic investments. These include investments in our energy programs like new technologies and tax credits. Also, education funding for Pell grants, job training programs, school modernization and other investments.

"Finally, the last \$275 billion will be in tax cuts. Increases in the child tax credit, expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit, several Business Tax Cuts and others.

"As far as local projects, I mentioned \$300 billion will likely go to improving our infrastructure. Our committee will exclude earmarks in this stimulus bill, so it is important that our local communities prepare themselves to identify projects and be ready to apply which is why I have been speaking to local officials throughout our district about potential opportunities.

"I am recommending to all the local governments in my district to look at all the federal grants they have received and tap into those same sources once again. I want to stress that the projects need to be "construction-ready" because all funding will have some strict oversight, which we need. Funding recipients will be required to report every 30 days on their expenditures and should there be any unobligated funds after 90 days they will have to return the money. Our San Antonio Channel Improvement Project is one of several perfect candidates for funding in our area.

"I want to encourage our communities to again revisit previous funding sources and identify projects within those agencies. This is a critical time and I want to make sure we are ready and we that we prosper from this stimulus."